

HACKNEY UNION NEWS

LIBRARIES SHUT IN DAWN RAID



On Friday 30th September at 1a.m. Hackney council sent hired contractors and police to finally evict the library occupations. The books were taken into storage and shelving, and equipment within the libraries smashed to ensure that no future library service could operate.

Earlier in the month a mass occupation and picket had taken place involving NALGO members, community activist, local trade unionist and the library

occupiers. At around 7p.m. bailiffs and police arrived at the Goldsmiths Row library only to be met by the large and angry picket. When they could not gain entry they withdrew. Similar events took place at Howard Road and Somerford Grove libraries. A major boost was received when the manual workers unions refused to take part in the emptying of the libraries.

Two weeks later hired bailiffs mounted an early morning raid on the three

libraries and gained repossession. There was a protest rally on the Town Hall steps at lunchtime and some NALGO members struck for the afternoon. By the next day some community activist had reoccupied the Goldsmiths Row library, removed the boarding from the building, and were again providing a library service. Smerford Grove library was similarly reoccupied over the weekend.

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WOMENS HEALTH UNDER THREAT

by Rosie Newbigging
Hackney Health Emergency

Women, as both consumers and providers of health, have consistently suffered as a result of the attacks on the N.H.S. City and Hackney is no exception as recent events have shown.

Abortions

Last October the District Health Authority took a decision which means that any women who are more than 12 weeks pregnant can not obtain an N.H.S. abortion unless there are "significant medical reasons". Women who can not afford to pay for an abortion will be forced to do so in the private sector and we will see the return to prominence of the "back street abortionist".

There is now just one Well Women clinic per week in the district following the cutting of 8 other clinics.

Beds Lost

Under the reformulated plans for phase 2 of the Homerton hospital between 40 and 100 long stay beds for the elderly will be lost. A large percentage of these patients will be women and so will most of the people who will be required to look after them in the community. The responsibility for unpaid, informal care virtually always falls on women. A health campaign to defend the N.H.S. must include a campaign for adequate community care facilities.



For information about Hackney Health Emergency contact Mike Bold, HNE Secretary, 24a Stoke Newington High Street 8DR or phone 249-2917



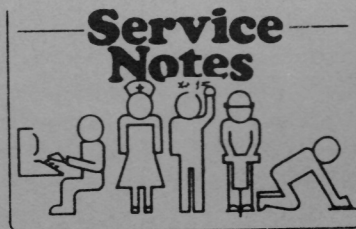
TUSU Plans Strategy Sessions on Tory Legislation

In the last twelve months, a mass of new legislation has become law. Many of these changes will have a profound effect on the wages and conditions of trade unionists in Hackney; and put at risk both jobs and services.

Local trade unionists have begun to equip themselves with detailed information about the impact of the Tory legislative package. A series of briefings have been sponsored by the Hackney Joint Shop Stewards Committee, and organised by the Trade Union Support Unit.

These one-day briefings consists of full

explanations by experts on impending legislation like the Poll Tax, the Housing Bill, the abolition of the ILEA, the new pension laws, the Immigration Act, and privatisation and tendering.



A major feature of the briefings is the inclusion of a strategy session which is geared for people negotiating and organising around those issues.

The first session, held Tuesday, 11 October was on the Housing Bill. Mike Jackson, a NUPE full time officer, opened the session.

The 23 stewards and activists at the briefing looked at the implications of Housing Actions Trusts (HATS), the lessons of housing associations, the potential loss of jobs and the need for tenants and trade unionists to unite.

For further information and registration details, contact Hackney TUSU, 489 Kingsland Road, E8 (01 249 8086).

P&O: 800 STILL OUT



Clive Walker

by John Lang

The seafarers dispute at Dover is now entering its eighth month. P+O have made no moves to end the dispute, despite the millions of pounds that the strike is costing them, and seem content to carry out a war of attrition on the strikers. (The dispute originally began over the saving of £6 million.)

Scab Union

The scabs on the ferries have now created their own 'union' apparently at the suggestion of Jeffrey Stirling the P+O boss. The company have since stated that they do not recognise the union!

The T.U.C. conference in September called for financial support and a boycott of P+O ferries.

Boycott campaigns have a role to play but as was shown clearly in the Wapping dispute they can not win a strike. It is therefore disappointing, as it has been for a number of months, that there appears to be no intentions to try and

organise industrial action to escalate the dispute.

Striking seafarers are still based at Hackney T.U.S.U. and your support is needed. Please contact 249-6930 for information on speakers, donations, literature and future events.

Vickers Dispute Ends

by John Lang

The strike at Vickers Shipbuilding and Engineering Ltd., reported in the previous issue, has ended following withdrawal of support by the unions involved. A ballot for a return to work was carried by the members who had to return with many of their demands still unmet.

400 welders who had originally came out on

strike prior to the rest of the workforce remained out for several more weeks. Major concessions were eventually given by the management especially with regard to health and safety. The management are now attempting to impose new conditions on the workers at Barrow and another strike could be looming.

EMPLOYMENT TRAINING PR FROM WELFARE...

by Mark Metcalf

The Trade Union movement has been criticised for its 1988 Annual Congress decision to boycott the Employment Training Programme (ETP). It has been argued that they are 'letting down the unemployed.' Yet this ignores other recent legislation affecting unemployed workers such as the forcing of young people onto the Youth Training Scheme (YTS) and the cutting back on social security benefits.

Pressure

The introduction of the ETP in September 1988 has increased the pressure on unemployed people to take any job or scheme. ETP has, in fact, replaced 37 separate training (the most important of which was the Community programme which, at least paid the Union rate 'for the job') schemes and aims to provide an average of 6 months training for 600,000 unemployed people.

OPPOSING

ET:

Participants on it will get their benefit plus £10. However as participants will be forced to pay the first £5 a week travel costs then the level of 'payment' is further reduced.

There is supposed to be training & work experience for participants with a private employer. However the funds of 1.5 billion are simply not enough to provide quality training. Nor is there enough time on the programme.

The government has tried to introduce a number of

England and Scotland took strike action in support of 'the rate for the job.'

Resistance by unemployed people is taking place. However in order to defeat ETP it will require the strength of both the unemployed and employed the organised and unorganised.



training schemes. One was the Job Training Scheme (JTS). This failed in 1987 when many on it left before completing their 'training.' As with the ETP, participants were offered £10 a week on top of their benefits

In Coventry more than 400 people demonstrated when the social security cuts were announced. More recently on June 15th 30,000 Community Programme workers in Northern

JTS failed when most people refused to go on it. This was as a result of the campaign launched by unemployed people and trade unionists. The TUC's withdrawal was a key moment in the battle.

In Hackney the Council refused to participate and did not become a managing agent. It is vital that pressure is applied on all councils to do the same with ETP.

PROGRAMME :

Fowler the employment Minister has claimed that the programme will be entirely 'voluntary' but as Thatcher made clear "only for the moment."

Unemployed workers are already forced to attend compulsory restart interviews every 6 months. From September workers attending these meetings are likely to find they are 'offered' the 'options' of training schemes, self-employment schemes or a place in the club. Failure to take up one or the other is likely to lead to benefits being stopped.

Replace full time jobs

There is no guarantee that the ETP schemes will not be used to replace full-time properly paid jobs. Council manual workers, in particular, are likely to be threatened with such moves.



Many Trade Unions, local authorities & voluntary groups are opposed to the introduction of the Employment Training Programme. In Birmingham the Trades Union Council's policy describes Employment Training as "unacceptable" and calls upon the TUC to withdraw

its support for the scheme. The Policy statement goes on to re-affirm four basic principles that must be met before any scheme receives trade union recognition:-

1. Participants must be paid the rate for the job.
2. There must be no compulsion to participate.
3. Participants must have employee status to ensure legal protection.
4. Trade Union approval and endorsement must be obtained by all scheme sponsors.



"You'll have little money, boring work, terrible conditions, you'll be sexually harassed and won't learn a thing. But it'll take you out of the unemployment figures, won't it?"

... TO WORKFARE

ETP will drive down the unemployed's wage expectations. In doing so it puts pressure on those in work to reduce their wage levels. Benefit cuts have the same effect and thus employed people have as much to gain from opposing them as the unemployed.

ETP is the start of
Workfare under which
people will have to work
to get any benefit.
Employers will get a cheap labour force and the unemployed figures will be reduced.

EMPLOYMENT TRAINING SCHEME

The Support Unit has produced a broadsheet expands on the information given in this article. Why not order copies of this broadsheet for your workplace, union branch, organisation or community group?

Copies are 10p each (plus postage) or 8p each for orders of 100 or more. (plus postage). Send your orders to
Hackney Trade Union
Support Unit, 489
Kingsland Road, London E8
4AU.
Telephone-01/249-8086.

PRIVATISATION THREAT FUELS POSTAL UNREST

by Postal workers

The first national stoppage in the Post Office for over a decade took place in September. What began as a one day strike over managements attempts to introduce regional pay in the letters section escalated with the introduction of casual labour to clear the backlog from the 24 hour stoppage. Many believe management provoked the dispute in an attempt to test the strength of the union and pave the way to cut cost and prepare for privatisation.

Dispute called off

Despite the 100,000 postal workers staying solid for 12 days the U.C.W. executive decided to call off the dispute without achieving any settlement concerning the issue of regional payments. The Executive washed their hands of the dispute by issuing guidelines for a return to work to be negotiated locally.

Privatisation threat

Those offices that wanted to stay out found themselves isolated. Having returned to work the members now face an onslaught from the management who are confident of the weakness of the UCW at national level. Victamisation of individuals plus imposition of new conditions will be just some of the problems facing the membership as well as the threat of privatisation.



NALGO Calls Day of Action In Support of Marion Gaima

Despite a negative ruling by the High Court on Marion Gaima's appeal to be granted political asylum, the campaign against her deportation is still in full gear.

Although it is likely that another appeal will be lodged by Marion's solicitors, the main emphasis of the campaign is to raise the demand that the Home Secretary drop the deportation proceedings on compassionate grounds.

The campaign is urging individuals to write to the Home Secretary pointing out that Marion has lived in Britain for 15 years. She has the support of a wide section of the community and should have a right to stay in the country she has made her home.

As an expression of support, Marion's union NALGO has called a

National Day of Action for November 24th.

Branches around the country will be asked to take some form of solidarity action, from taking time off work to get petitions signed to possible industrial action. In the Hackney NALGO Branch a motion was put forward calling for industrial action on the day.

A meeting at the House of Commons is also planned on the Day of Action. Its purpose is to give MPs, clergy and community groups an opportunity to come together and publicly express their support for Marion's campaign.

Two weeks after the Day of Action, a vigil will be held at the Home Office while representatives from the defence campaign hand in the thousands of signatures collected on petitions demanding that Marion is allowed to stay.

NEW ACT IS A 'SCABS' CHARTER'

by John Lang

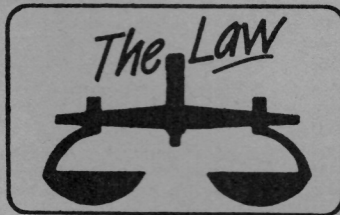
The Employment Act 1988 came into force on the 26th July. This is this government's fourth piece of trade union legislation aimed at weakening the labour movement.

In addition to any common law rights deriving from a union's rulebook members will now have access to many legal rights. This latest Tory anti-union law has been described as a "scabs charter". The following are just some of the reasons why the legislation has been labelled as such.

Taking industrial action

Under the new Act members who fail to participate in industrial action, even after a majority vote for action through a secret ballot, can not be disciplined. Therefore the sections within the rulebook which enables the union to discipline members for crossing picket lines becomes invalid. Strikebreakers may also encourage other workers to return to work without fear of disciplinary action.

It states that members have the right not to be induced to take part in a strike or other industrial action without first having the opportunity to vote in a secret ballot.



Furthermore a member can bring a legal claim **before** their union has made any effort to induce them to participate. All the member needs to show is that it is 'likely' that they would be induced to join in. The unions must now ballot before **any** industrial action including non contractual work such as banning voluntary overtime.

Closed shop

The legislation means that the closed shop is now impossible to enforce legally. Unions will no longer be able to take action to enforce the closed shop and dismissal or other actions for non membership of a union will be illegal. A person employed at a pre-entry closed shop who is a union member can relinquish their union membership without the union or the employer being able legally to do anything about it.

A Commissioner for the Rights of Trade Union Members has been set up. The Commissioner's supposed role is to provide assistance to union members to enforce their statutory rights against their unions. This includes financial and legal assistance. In reality the Commissioner's role is to harass the Trade Union movement. The Commissioner will be appointed and not elected.



These are just a few examples of the latest impositions that have been placed on the Trade Union movement. 10 years ago they would have been unthinkable but this latest Act has received little or no reaction.

Part 2 of the Act is entitled Employment and Training. This concerns the abolition of the Manpower Services Commission and the setting up of a new Training Commission. The Employment Training Programme is dealt with on pages 4 and 5 of this issue.

HOUSING STRIKE ENDS

by Allocations staff

Housing workers from the allocations section of the housing department in Hackney have returned to work after a three week strike.

The strike began when management tried to impose a new lettings system on the section. This would have involved inviting housing applicants, most of whom are homeless families currently staying in hotels all over London, to turn up at a district office where they might or might not receive an offer of accomadation.

This is because management insist that up to 50% more applicants should be invited to view property than there are properties to view. This would have meant allocations staff

having to explain to a family, who may have travelled to view from as far away Bayswater, that there was no property for them to see.

Allocations staff were not prepared to do this. Numerous meetings took place with management to suggest alternatives to the policy. Management responded to this by deducting pay from the allocations staff. The dispute then began.

Financial pressures and failure to spread the action meant that after 3 weeks on strike the allocations staff returned to work with no concessions from the management. The problems are still persisting and with further cuts in the pipeline and a 20% vacancy rate in housing alone, they are likely to escalate.

LIBRARY RAID : 2 ARRESTED

Continued from page 1

The dawn raid of the 30th resulted in the arrest of two people. Since that time the campaign committee has been meeting to consider their next step. There is a strong mood for further anti-cuts campaigns and NALGO members are also meeting to consider how they can push their union into a stronger anti-cuts position.

Opposition

The last nine months of the library campaign must have shaken the council. It has proven that there is a large body of opposition to cuts and the damage inflicted upon local services by a supposedly Socialist council. Indeed few councillors can be happy with the fact that they have used the courts, police and bailiffs against their own workers and deprived local people of free and easy access to books, information and education.

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Hackney Union News is produced by workers at Hackney Trade Union Support Unit. The unit is a Trades Council Project with funding from Hackney Borough Council. Any comments, letters or suggestions on the contents would be welcomed. Send them to:-
HUN, 489 Kingsland Road E8.

